

Press Release: United States District Judge Wendell A. Miles
Passes Away at Age 97

The judges of the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan are sad to report that former Chief Judge Wendell Miles has passed away. He was 97 years old.

Born in Holland, MI in 1916, Judge Miles received his B.A. Degree from Hope College, his Master's Degree from the University of Wyoming, and his J.D. from the University of Michigan in 1942. He entered upon active duty in the Army after law school during World War II and served in Europe post-war until 1948 when he returned to Holland to practice law with his father.

Judge Miles began a distinguished career of public service as Prosecuting Attorney for Ottawa County until he became United States Attorney for the Western District during the administration of President Eisenhower. He was an Ottawa County Circuit Judge for fourteen years until his nomination by President Nixon to the federal court in 1974. He served as Chief Judge from 1980 to 1986. He retired from the federal bench in 2008.

"Judge Wendell Miles devoted his entire professional career to serve the cause of justice in our country. His steadfast devotion to fostering the rule of law is a model for all judges," stated Chief Judge Paul L. Maloney.

Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge David McKeague, a former colleague of Judge Miles on the District Court in the Western District stated, "Judge Miles was highly respected by all of the judges in the Sixth Circuit. He was a wonderful role model and an inspiration to me and will be greatly missed."

Former Chief Judge Robert Holmes Bell opined that Judge Miles was a judge's judge, a student of legal history, and one of the longest serving judges of this court. Judge Miles served with distinction on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court shortly after its founding, having been appointed by then Chief Justice William Rehnquist.

Magistrate Judge Hugh W. Brenneman stated, "Judge Miles was one of the men who gave the 'Greatest Generation' its name."

Judge Miles married Mariette Bruckert who predeceased him. Three children were born of the marriage.

The United States District Court will convene a memorial service in honor of Judge Miles in the Gerald R. Ford Federal Courthouse in Grand Rapids on a date to be determined.